1660
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THE CASE OF SWEARING (AT ALL) DISCUSSED.

WITH

Several Objections answered, the Primitive Practises therein asserted out of several Ancient Authors; together with several Presidents out of the Book of Martyrs.

The inconveniences that follows the present practice of swearing, which might easily be prevented, by a Law to punish, false Witnesse-bearing, and lying, as well as other evils.

ALSO,

A Word to all People that are zealous for the Commands of CHRIST, recorded in the Scripture.

By a friend of Truth and Righteousness, *John Crook*.

Because of Oaths the Land mourns.
And for want of truth and righteousness in the Land, the innocent and uppright are made a prey.

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The Caſe of ſwearing diſcuſſed.

MAn was planted a Noble Vine, wholly a right ſeed, but he is turned into the degenerated plant of a ſtrange Vine, more degenerate than the Oxe or the Aſs; he is fallen from the uprightneſs, ſincerity, and ſimplicity, into the invention, ſubtilty, and fleſhly wiſdome, where he lies grovelling upon the earth, thinking by the multitude of his inventions, to recover himſelf, and to come to life again; but he is fenced out with a flaming Sword, ſo that to life he cannot come, but through death, which he ſeeks to avoid, by following the counſel of the Evil-One, who ſayes (in this) as he did formerly to the woman, *Thou ſhalt not ſurely dye*; though God had ſaid, (as it is written) *Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely dye:* And alſo that which the Apoſtle feared might come upon ſome of the *Corinthians*, is come upon all the world, *viz.* The Serpent that beguiled *Eve*, hath beguiled men and women in this age, through his ſubtilty, by corrupting their mindes from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt; and as the Deceiver then denyed what God had ſpoken, and not onely ſo, but alſo put his own meaning and expoſition upon Gods Command, that ſo he might accompliſh his end; for ſaid the Perverter then, *God doth know that in the day thou eateſt thereof, your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* And hath not the ſame Serpent beguiled the people of this age, from the naked ſimplicity, to hearken to the diſguized ſubtilty and fleſhly wiſdome, not onely to deny that Chriſt hath given out an abſolute Command, that his followers ſhould not ſwear at all, (by any Oath) but alſo as he did then, ſo he hath done ſince, and doth do now in this age, put his expoſition and meaning to Chriſts commands, in ſaying in ſome men, that it is not all ſwearing that is forbid-

den, but ſwearing in mens ordinary communication: This expoſition, the ſubtilty in ſome men puts upon Chriſts Command, whereupon they conclude, that notwithſtanding Chriſts command not to ſwear at all, yet when any man is called before a Magiſtrate, if the Magiſtrate require it, he ought to ſwear, *&c.*

To which it is ſaid, Chriſts own words at the 33 Verſe of the fifth of *Matthew*, anſwers this objection, in theſe words: *Again it hath been ſaid in old time, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf, but ſhalt perform to the Lord thy Oaths; but I ſay unto you, Swear not at all, &c.* (Mark) *Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf, &c.* The Law in old time did not allow of ſwearing in their ordinary communication, and dealing, for that was taking Gods Name in vain, *Exodus* 20. 7. which was forbidden from the beginning, but in that caſe wherein they were allowed to ſwear, they were not to forſwear themſelves: But Chriſt Jeſus the Son, by whom the Father ſpeaks in theſe laſt times, *(who is the end of the Law for righteouſneſs) to all that believe in him*, who is the truth and ſubſtance of all, ſayes, *Swear not at all.* (Mark) the truth ſayes, *ſwear not at all, for whatever is more then yea, and nay, comes of evil.* Now if Chriſt the Truth, had ſpoken no more in theſe words, *Swear not at all, &c.* then to forbid prophane ſwearing (as they call it) or not ſwearing in mens ordinary communication, what doth he forbid more then was forbidden in *old time*? ſeeing, as before is proved, that all prophane ſwearing, which is a taking of Gods Name in vain, or ſwearing in ordinary communication, or dealing, was forbidden from the beginning. And again, how doth this hold parallel with the reſt of Chriſts ſayings and compariſons, *viz.* What *was ſaid in the old time by the Law*, and is now ſaid by himſelf, who is the ſum *and end of the Law for righteouſneſs, &c.* and whether they who thus reaſon, do not by their Traditions make Chriſts Command of none effect? And do not all thoſe that plead that the Saints ought and may ſwear, when they are called to it by a Magiſtrate, not onely break Chriſts Commands themſelves, but teaches others ſo to do? whoſe portion may be read in *Matthew* 5. 19. and by their thus reaſoning in their dark mindes, make Chriſt to ſpeak nothing fur-

further, nor fuller, then was ſpoken in old time, though *to old time it was ſaid, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf, but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thy Oaths, &c.* But ſaith Chriſt, *I ſay unto you, ſwear not at all:* Now let all judge, who are not blinded, through gain or tradition, whether thoſe that ſay the Saints ought to ſwear (when called to it as aforeſaid) do not wholly make void theſe words, viz. *Whatſoever is more then theſe commeth of evil*; and ſo they being in the evil, are blinded, and hate the light that would let them ſee, and ſpeak evil of it becauſe it would reprove them, and being in darkneſs, they know not whither they go; but as ſaith the Prophet, *Iſay*, 5. 20. *call darkneſs light, and light darkneſs, and good evil, and evil good.* And it is further manifeſt to all that have an eye to ſee, that *Chriſt, the ſubſtance and the truth*, in ended as he ſpake, when he ſaid, *Swear not at all*; which was to forbid all manner of ſwearing, without exception; becauſe when Chriſt intended an exception at the 32 Verſe, he expreſſed it in theſe words: *But I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, ſaving for the cauſe of Adultery.* (Mark) *ſaving for the cauſe of Adultery*; Where Chriſt plainly expreſſeth the exception: But for proud men to make exceptions, where Chriſt hath made none, is to ſet Self on the Throne. And again, at the 28 Verſe the exception is expreſſed, viz. *Whoſoever ſhall look upon a woman, and luſt after her.* Mark) *to luſt after her*, and is not left to vain man to put his meaning to it.

It is further objected by ſome, that by thoſe *of old time*, is meant the Expoſitors of the Law, who ſaid, If men ſwear truth, that was not evil, but onely they were not to ſwear to that which was falſe, *&c.*

To which it is anſwered, that this being an invention of the Objector, and no where ſo ſaid in the Scripture of truth, it needs no other anſwer then a denyal, but the word in the Greek reads it thus, *It was ſaid to them of old time*, thereby implying thoſe to whom and by whom God ſpake, *&c.* τοῖς ἀρχαίοις *antiquis.*

But it is ſtrongly objected, That the Apoſtle in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, allows of ſwearing before a Magiſtrate; as in *Hebrews 6. 16.* in theſe words, *For men verily ſwears by the*

greater

greater, and an Oath for confirmation, is to them an end of all ſtrife, &c.

To which is replyed, there the Apoſtle by a ſimilitude makes it out to the *Hebrews*, how that God ſware by himſelf, becauſe he could not ſwear by a greater, to confirm the Promiſe, *That by two immutable things, by which it was not poſſible for God to lye, that they might have ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before them; and God being more abundantly willing to ſhew to the Heirs of the promiſe the immutability of his Counſel, confirmed it by an Oath*, which thing was uſed among men that lived in ſtrife, to put an end to ſtrife, they uſed an Oath, and they ſware by the greater, an Oath for confirmation was to them an end of all ſtrife, and becauſe God could not ſwear by a greater, he ſware by himſelf, and by the Oath of God is the promiſe confirmed to the righteous ſeed, that they might have ſtrong conſolation, no more to ſuffer ſtrife, and fears, and doubts, to enter upon them; but that they all might witneſs in themſelves, an end put to all ſtrife and contention, *&c.* as truly and really in the inward man, by Chriſt Jeſus, Gods Oath, and Covenant, as an outward Oath uſed among men (that live in ſtrife) was to them *for confirmation the end of all ſtrife*: And in this caſe under the Law was an Oath required, *Exodus* 22. 10. *If a man deliver unto his neighbour an Oxe, or an Aſſe, or a ſheep, or any beaſt to keep, and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man ſeeing it, then ſhall an Oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand to his neighbours goods, and the Owner of it ſhall accept thereof, and he ſhall not make it good.* (Mark) the Owner of the goods was to accept thereof, *and he ſhall not make it good*: ſo an Oath for confirmation was an end to the controverſie, and in this *old time* under the Law, they were not to forſwear themſelves, but Chriſt ſayes, *Swear not at all*, who is *the end of the Law for Righteouſneſs*, &c. Now the Apoſtle never intended (by that which was uſed *in old time*, and among men that lived in ſtrife, all which he brings in as a compariſon and a ſimilitude to confirm the promiſe, *&c.*) and not to incourage men to break Chriſts Commands, who ſayes, *Swear not at all*, nor to give any ſort of men incouragement to walk contrary

to

to the Apoſtles Doctrine, who ſaid, *Above all things my Brethren ſwear not, &c.* Neither that they ſhould take incouragement from his compariſon *to live in ſtrife*, becauſe men that uſed ſwearing *at all*, did ſo; neither did the Apoſtle any more intend to lay a foundation for ſwearing, or for men to impoſe Oaths upon others, by his ſimilitude of what was uſed among ſtrifeful men, then he intended that the Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould bring a Heathen Poet to prove their Doctrine, becauſe he ſayes, *Acts* 17.28. *As certain alſo of your own Poets have ſaid, &c.* And may it not be as juſtly concluded that Parents ſhould take incouragement to correct their children after their own pleaſure, becauſe he ſayes, *Heb.* 12. 9. 10. *We have had Fathers of our fleſh, who for a few dayes chaſtiſed us after their own pleaſures, &c.* And as honeſtly as it may or ought to be concluded, that the Apoſtle intended that men ſhould either ſwear themſelves *at all*, or compel others ſo to do. from theſe words, *viz. For verily men ſwears by the greater, and an Oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife.* And further, is there any more ground given by the Apoſtle for the Saints to ſwear *at all*, by any Oath from the words before-mentioned, then there is ground from Chriſts words to the Saints *to exerciſe Lordſhip one over another*, becauſe he ſayes, *Mark* 10. 42. *the Gentiles do ſo:* Beſides, did not thoſe that uſed ſwearing, uſe it onely in thoſe caſes where an Oath would *put an end to all ſtrifes?* But is not Oaths impoſed at this day where no ſtrife is? Nay, are they not impoſed for the beginning of ſtrife? Let the righteous judge how far thoſe that would be accounted Saints, are fallen, that they are ſhort in their practiſes of theſe men that lived in ſtrife in ages paſt.

Again, to impoſe Oaths upon others from the Apoſtles words, is to make the Apoſtle a Tranſgreſſor; for he ſayes, *Galathians* 2. 18. *If I build again the things that I deſtroyed, am I not a Tranſgreſſor?* Now he condemned ſome among the *Corinthians*, for walking as men, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. *For ye are yet carnal, whereas there is envying among you, diviſion and ſtrife; are you not carnal, and walk as men?* (Mark) there was *ſtrife* and *diviſion* among them, and from thence he proves them carnal, and therefore they walk *as men*, which the Apoſtle condemns;

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whereas they should walk as became Saints, who are redemed from among men, *Revel.* 14. 14. out of *envy, strife, and division*, and are called unto *love, righteousness, and peace*, which all who walk as becomes Saints witness.

Object. That an oath cannot be bad, because even God himself did often use swearing in Scripture *&c.*

Answ. That it may become God alone to swear, because he alone is true, and cannot lye, but all men are lyars, as sayes the Apostle; *And the Lord hath sworn, and will not repent*, *Psa.* 110. 4. Let him then swear that cannot repent of his Oath, and he is not to be imitated in swearing by that man, who cannot imitate him in fulfilling.

It is again objected by some, that all proceedings at Law depends upon swearing; therefore they conclude that all men must swear, *&c.*

Answ. That the foundation of the Law of *England*, and the present practise and proceedings thereupon, do not agree; as may appear by these instances following, *viz.* One main and principal foundation of the Law of *England*, is the Law of God; so sayes the Law-book, Doctor and Student, *Chapter* 2. *page* 4. in these words, *There is a Law written in the heart of man, which is man created in the Image of God; and this Law is alwayes good and righteous, stirring up the man to do the good, and abhor the evil; and therefore against this Law* (sayes the book) *Prescription, Statute, Custome, may not prevail; and if any be brought in against it, they be void, and against Justice.* Now consider, according to your Law, how few proceedings are according to Justice, and instead of being made void, as being against Justice, they are incouraged, and hath been.

Again, it is the Law of *England*, 9. *Hen.* 3. 29. *That Right and justice should neither be sold, deferred, nor denied to any man, &c.* But let those that have to do at Courts, speak and bear witness, whether both denying and delaying, both of Law and Right, be not that which they meet withall, and for selling and buying of it, let the great and excessive Fees which some Lawyers take for pleading speak, who are in repute; and as the people say, if you can but retain such a man, you need not fear your Cause, *&c.*

Again

Again, it is the Law of *England*, *that none ſhould be put into Office upon ſuit, or for favour or affection, but upon deſert*; 12 *Rich.* 2. 2. 5. *Edw.* 6. 16. The firſt part of *Cooks Inſtitutes*, *page* 2. 34. A Law (ſayes *Cook*) *worthy to be written in letters of Gold.* But how contrary to theſe Statutes the preſent practiſes are, let the righteous judge.

Further, both by the Common-law, and Statute-law, the Judges were not to hear the Plantiffs Cauſe, if he *firſt put not in ſecurity to anſwer his Adverſaries damages, if he complained of him wrongfully*, *Mirror. page* 64. 37 *Edw.* 3. 18. 38 *Edw.* 3. 9. And he that chargeth a man with any accuſation, ought to put in Security to make good his accuſation; and the Law hath provided a punithment for him, that makes not his accuſation good; But how contrary the preſent practiſes and proceedings of Courts are at this day, let the Cauſes that comes into them ſpeak: Do not they iſſue out their Writs, grounded upon divers plain and notorious lyes? As that they have ſent to the Sheriff of *Middleſex*, (which they have not done) and that he hath returned, that the Party is not within his Liberty, (which he hath not done) but lies lurking in another County, (which is moſt commonly falſe, the man going up and down as at other times) and the Sheriff of *Middleſex* knowing nothing of it. Again, They ſay, they have taken Pledges to proſecute, *viz*; *John Doe*, and *Richard Roe*, which is alſo a Deceipt, and a Lye, thoſe being common feigned names put into all Writs, and theſe Writs made up of ſo many lyes, (being framed by any Clerk, and given forth in the chief Magiſtrates name) is borne witneſs to be the Chief Juſtice of *England*, is the ground and foundation of all proceedings at Law; whereby the known Law of *England*, in Caſes of Debt, men ought to be firſt ſummoned to appear to anſwer the Plantiff before they be arreſted; but how contrary the preſent proceedings are, let all ſober men judge.

Again, the Law ſaves, *Mirror. page* 2. 49. *It is an abuſe of the Common-Law, to appear or anſwer by an Attorney*: But the preſent practiſe is quite contrary; for they have, and do deny, to accept of a mans Appearance in perſon, although the words of their own Writs are ſo; In theſe words, *So that we may*

have his body before us at our Court at Weſtminſter, ſuch a day, &c. And it is further evidenced, that the Appearing by an *Attorney* was firſt in favour, and in eaſe of the Subject, that ſo they might depute one for their eaſe; as in the book *De Attornati Faciendo*; but now ſo is Juſtice and Judgement turned backward, that that which was for the eaſe of the people, is now made uſe of, to maintain a trade of deceipt. It is written in *Cooks Reports*, in *Richard Go frey's* Caſe, that *Exceſſus in re qualibet, jure reprobatur communi; as exceſſive diſtreſſes, exceſſive aids, exceſſive ame ciaments, are againſt the Common-Law.* And how contrary the preſent practiſes is, let the proceedings againſt the innocent people (called *Quakers*) bear witneſs in d vers Counties in *England*, who have been fined more then they have been worth, ſome it may be for not ſwearing, and others for not reſpecting of mens perſons; but Preſidents enough may be ſeen of their cruel Oppreſſions in this kinde, in a book in Print, called, *The Record of the ſufferings for Tythes*, and in moſt Priſons in *England*, examples of exceſſive cruelty may be found exerciſed upon poor innocent people, becauſe they cannot ſubmit to pay theſe exceſſive Fines impoſed on them, contrary to any known Law, and the practiſes of Ages paſt; but ſuch men flye to Cuſtome, when no known Law can be found, and abuſe the word *Cuſtome* as many Juſtices do, and have done the word *Diſcretion*; neither of them warranting the practiſes of proud ſelf-willed men, there being *Cuſtomes* that are evill, which ought to be aboliſhed, as ſayes the Law; and *Cook in his Reports in Gatewards Cauſe*, ſayes, *Cuſtome* ought to be reaſonable, *Et excerta Cauſa rationabili uſitata*; as *Littleton* ſayes: and if every Cuſtome ſhould be a Law, becauſe Judges calls them ſo, ſurely it may be ſaid, that King and Biſhops would have been ſtill ſtanding in *England*; and the word *Diſcretion*, is as much abuſed by corrupt men, they making it a Cloak to cover their deceitful Actings, when they have no Law to warrant their practiſes: But *Diſcretion*, as *Cook* ſayes, *is a knowledge or underſtanding to diſcern betwixt truth and falſhood, and between right and wrong, between ſhadowes and ſubſtance, and between equity, and colourable gloſſes and pretences, and not to do according to our wills, and private affections*; For,

ſayes

ſayes he, *Talis diſcretio, diſceſſionem confundit, and hath been adjudged in the Caſe of Commiſſion of Suers, Diſcretion is to be bounded with Reaſon, Law, and Juſtice*; and ſo the word *Cuſtome* is abuſed, and urged by corrupt men, in oppoſition to the expreſs Command of Chriſt, Who ſayes, *Swear not at all.*

By theſe Examples the honeſt-hearted may ſee, how contrary the preſent practiſes of the Law is to the foundation of the Law; and to that which is good, being uſed lawfully, is become a dead thing, *execution being the Life of the Law*; and hereby the Righteous, that it is not made for, is moſt hurt by it, and the *Flatterer* and *Evil-doer* incouraged; therefore their reaſoning is not good, who ſay all men ought to ſwear, becauſe of long time they have uſed to do ſo, and continue ſtill to do ſo; therefore the queſtion is not, what men do practiſe, but what men ought to practiſe, according to a true Rule, and Line. For we read not (that I remember) among all *Iſraels* Laws, that any of their Officers were made by an Oath, *as Judges, Rulers, Kings, or Prieſts, or Prophets*, or required to ſwear, before they took the work or Office upon them: But we read, *Deuter.* 19. 15. *At the mouth of two, or at the mouth of three Witneſſes, ſhall the matter be eſtabliſhed.* (Mark) *the matter was to be eſtabliſhed without ſwearing*: For if they ſhould have been firſt ſworn, it would have been ſo written, it being a Command to *Iſrael*; and in the caſe of Life and Death, *At the mouth of two or three Witneſſes, ſhall he that is worthy of Death be put to Death; but at the mouth of one Witneſs he ſhall not be put to Death.* In this caſe of Life and Death, no Oath was uſed that we read of, *Deuter.* 17. 6. And if any falſe Witneſs did ariſe, he, and the party he witneſſed againſt, was to ſtand before the Lord, and before the Prieſt, and Judges which ſhould be in thoſe dayes, and the Judges were to make diligent inquiſition, *And if the Witneſs be a falſe Witneſs, and have teſtified falſly againſt his Brother, then ſhall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his Brother, ſo ſhall you put away the evil from among you*, *Deut.* 1916, 17, 18. But no ſwearing is mentioned; and if any matter did ariſe too hard for them in judgement between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and ſtroak and

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ſtroak, being matters of controverſie within their gate, they were not to ſwear men to finde it out, neither were they to act preſumptiouſly their own paſſion and wills, and then cover it, with ſaying they were Judges of the Law, and they judged it ſo, and many things being left to diſcretion; and therefore ſayes wilful men, in the ſtoutneſs of their hearts, If we do what we cannot anſwer, take your courſe againſt us: And thus preſumptiouſly do they act their own wills upon the innocent, but *Iſrael* was not to do ſo; but in caſes too hard for them in judgement, they were to ariſe and go up to the place, which the Lord God ſhould chooſe, and they were to come to the Prieſt and Levite, and unto the Judges which ſhould be in thoſe dayes, and enquire, and they were to ſhew the Sentence of Judgement, and they were to do according to the Sentence which they of the place, which the Lord ſhould chooſe, ſhould ſhew therein; *And thou ſhalt obſerve to do according to all that they ſhall inform thee*, &c. *And the man that will do preſumptiouſly, and will not hearken to the Prieſts that ſtands up there, to miniſter before the Lord thy God or unto the Judges, even that man ſhall die, and thou ſhalt put away the evil from* Iſrael, *Deut.* 17 8,9,10,11,12. This was Gods Law to *Iſrael*, that the *Preſumptious* that would not wait upon the Lord to receive a Law where there was none, *ſhould be put to death.*

Was it an offence of old to act *preſumptiouſly?* And is it not now a crime worthy to be taken notice of by the chief in power in theſe dayes? Or are there none that have done preſumptiouſly? in caſting innocent people into priſon, when they have done no offence, nor broken no known Law, except it is become an offence to wait upon the Lord, and to pray unto him, for which cauſe, and none other, the innocent have been caſt into priſon by the preſumptious and ſelf-willed men, who when they had no Law, have acted in their wills, contrary to Law; let ſuch remember that by Gods Law, they that would not wait upon the Lord for a Law, but would act *preſumptiouſly* without a Law, were to be put to death.

Objection. That by not ſwearing at all, we are to underſtand by any creature, and not by God the Creator, for they were commanded to ſwear by God, *Thou ſhalt ſwear by the Lord*; as in *Deut.* 10. *&c.*

Anſwer.

Answer. That according to Christs own words, *Swear not at all*, without any exception, as before hath been proved, and is expounded in the large Bible in *Quarto*, in the Margent, on *Matthew* 5. 37. in these words, *Whatsoever you vouch, vouch it barely; and whatsoever you deny, deny it barely, without any more words; for whatsoever is more then these, comes of the Devil*: And also in the same book it is said, on *James* 5. 12. *That what you have to say, or affirm, speak or affirm it simply, and without any Oath, and that that you will deny, deny simply and flatly.* And again, this Objection is more fully answered in *Matthew* 23. 21, 22. *Whosoever swears by the Temple, swears by it, and by him that dwells therein; and whosoever swears by heaven, swears by the Throne of God, and him that sits thereon:* So that he that swears by the creature, shall not be exempted by the Creator from prophaning his name; for now it is said, *Swear not at all.*

Again, it is objected by the former Objectors, (who sayes all proceedings at Law depends upon swearing) that if we should take every mans word, when they are called to give their testimony in all cases, it might be of dangerous consequence both to mens lives, liberties, and estates, *&c.*

To which it is answered, That if the same Law, or a stricter, were made against lying, and bearing false witness, in all cases, as against mens swearing, false swearing, or for-swearing themselves, and that Law truly and constantly executed, without respect of persons, it would then be of no more danger to believe a mans yea or nay to the questions that are asked him by the Magistrate, whatever they be, then if they had kissed the book, or used any other posture with the hand, or spoken never so many words (his affirming or denying to the case in question, being his testimony) I say the truth of these mens testimonies may as easily, plainly, and fully be discerned, and punished, according to the Law in that case provided, if it be false, as if they had used never so many words, or postures, as aforesaid; and therefore mens lives, liberties, and estates, may every way be as well secured by a Law provided to punish lying and bearing false witness, as by any Law that is made, or can be made, to punish swearing, or false-swearing, so called.

ed. Again, as to the preſent ſtate of things, becauſe there is no Law in being, as ſome ſay, to puniſh lying, therefore we muſt ſwear, *&c.*

What Law is there to force men to ſwear, or to puniſh thoſe that ſwear falſly, or againſt their knowledge, to their Anſwers to Bills in *Chancery* and *Chequer*? And is it not common and ordinary for men ſo to do? If there be a Law, why is it not put in execution? or doth Cuſtome make ſwearing falſly (and againſt a mans knowledge) no offence; and a mans ſpeaking truly, without ſwearing, an offence puniſhable with impriſonment? Who hath given this authority to Cuſtome? Let Equity anſwer: But of this more may be ſpoken afterward in its place.

Objection. That an Oath is a ſolemn thing, and that when people are called before a Magiſtrate to ſwear, there is an awe upon them; and therefore thoſe that are wicked, and Liars, *&c.* are afraid to forſwear themſelves, when called before a Magiſtrate.

This Objection is for what anſwered in the preceding Objection: But further it is anſwered, That the fear upon People when they come to ſwear, is either the fear of God, which is good, or ſome other fear which is evill, as the fear of man only, and his puniſhment; this laſt fear is not to be feared by thoſe that fear the Lord; *Fear ye not their fear, but fear him that can deſtroy both ſoul and body*; and this fear is pure, and keeps the heart clean, whereby God is ſeen, and deceit and guile is kept out, a diſcruth is ſpoken in all caſes; and he that abides in the fear of the Lord, ſtands in awe, and ſins not, and is kept not only from ſwearing, but lying alſo: but he that onely fears man, and his puniſhment, when he comes to know and underſtand that there is as great or greater puniſhment to be inflicted upon him for his lying, as for his falſe ſwearing, or forſwearing himſelf, or bearing falſe witneſs; then he alſo will ſtand in as much fear of a Lye, as of an Oath; (or that which is called ſo) beſides, it is commonly ſeen by experience, that thoſe who care not what they ſpeak, matters not much what they ſwear, if ſo be they can but keep from the puniſhment of the Law; but it is not ſo with the Righteous, for the fear of

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the Lord makes them ſober and ſolid, and their words to be few and ſavoury, ſeaſored with truth; but thoſe that fear man, and his diſpleaſure and puniſhment only, when they know the ſame Law to be in force againſt lying, as againſt ſwearing, or ſwearing falſly, they will then be as ſolemn, and as afraid to lye, as now to forſwear themſelves.

It is objected by others, who ſay the Scripture is their rule, that the holy men in old time did ſwear, as we may read under the Law, as *Abraham* ſware, and *David*, and *Solomon*: to all which it is ſaid, Chriſt is the end of the Law; and he who is the Oath of God, by whom God ſpeaks in theſe laſt dayes, ſayes, *Swear not at all*; and he that is greater then *Solomon*, whoſe day *Abraham* ſaw; but he himſelf is now come, and ſayes, *Swear not at all*; and he who is *Davids* Lord ſayes, *Swear not at all*, who is the end of the Prophets, the everlaſting High-Prieſt and Covenant of God, the ſumme and ſubſtance of all the things, the Law was but a ſhadow of; Who is the Truth, the Life, and the Way to the Father, and teaches all his followers to ſpeak truth to their neighbour, and to walk in the truth, (which makes free from ſwearing *at all*) notwithſtanding the traditions of their Fathers in the fleſh, or the practiſes of ſtrifeful men; for by Chriſt the Truth, they are taught to ſpeak truth, and not to fear them that can but kill the body, but to fear him that can caſt both ſoul and body into hell, which fear he hath placed in their hearts, that they might not depart from him, but abide in his Doctrine, which ſayes, *Swear not all.*

It is further objected by ſome, that the Angel ſware in the *Revelations*, and that *Paul* ſware, as may be read in his Epiſtles, in ſaying, *I proteſt before God*; and in often ſaying, *I call the Lord God to Witneſs*, which is ſaid to be an Oath, *&c.*

To the firſt that the Angel ſware, it is ſaid, *Let all the Angels worſhip him*, Who hath ſaid, *Swear not at all.* And to that that *Paul* proteſted before God, it is the intruſion of the Tranſlator, it being neither in the Greek Copies, nor Latine, nor ſome Engliſh Copies.

To the ſecond, That he calls God to Witneſs, that is no Oath, but onely an earneſt atteſtation, an Oath being that where-

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by ſomething is ſworn by, (as *Iſrael* was to ſwear by the Name of the Lord) and calling God to witneſs, or ſaying, *God is my Witneſs*, is no more then to ſay, I ſpeak in Gods preſence, or before him who knowes the hearts and thoughts of all men, and is no formal Oath (as it is called, or commonly uſed in oppoſition to a plain and earneſt expreſſion of a mans mind.)

Again, it is objected, that not to ſwear at all is only Evangelical counſel, and not an abſolute prohibition of all ſwearing in all caſes, though it be ſaid, *Swear not at all*; ſo it is ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not kill*, and yet in ſome caſes it is lawfull to kill.

Anſwer. That forbidding to ſwear at all, is no where in Scripture called Evangelical Counſel; but ſuch an Abſolute and Poſitive Command, and backed with the Apoſtles Doctrine, that I know not any Command fuller in the Scripture of truth: And whereas it is ſaid, That to kill, is a prohibition, and yet in ſome caſes allowable yet it is no where ſo ſaid of ſwearing, (in the New Teſtament, or) ſince the time of its prohibition, that it is lawful in any caſe to ſwear; neither was it practiſed in the firſt ages of the true Church, as may appear hereafter in its proper place, under the head of Preſidents of them who denyed ſwearing; and though it be lawful in ſome caſes to kill, (though it be ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not kill*) yet it is no where ſaid, it is lawful to ſwear in any caſe, as aforeſaid, but on the contrary, Woe be unto them that brings a Chriſtian to ſuch a neceſſity, that he muſt ſwear, as woe attends them that neceſſitates a Chriſtian to kill.

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Now follows ſeveral Preſidents, or Examples, both out of Holy Writ, and Antient Authors of the beſt repute among them that are called learned.

FIrſt, in the Scripture of truth in the Old Teſtament, where in the ſeveral caſes wherein ſwearing was uſed, is recorded; as *Gen.*24.3. *Exod.*22.11. *Numb.* 5.21. *Levit.*19.12. *Deuter.* 6.13. and 10 20. *Jeremy* 12.16. *Amos* 8.14. *Zepha.*1.5. (theſe being the particular caſes and occaſions wherein ſwearing is mentioned) where the Reader may obſerve at his leaſure the caſes in which ſwearing is uſed, and the ground, and cauſe, and end of it; but neither was the *Judges, nor Rulers, nor Prophets, nor Prieſts, nor Kings, nor any other Officer* that we read of, conſtituted or made by an oath, as neceſſary to let him into his work, or office, or place, or imployment, or that without which he could not ſo officiate, or be imployed; but on the contrary, an oath was not ſo much as tendered to them, or required at their hands; neither in the greateſt accidents or caſes that fell out in *Iſrael*, was it to be determined by thoſe which were ſworn, or took an oath, except before excepted in the caſe of goods committed to his Neighbour to keep, &c. *Exodus* 22. 11. and the woman in caſe of Adultery, *Numb.* 5. 21. who was to purge her ſelf by an oath, and ſo was determined by a ſignal and eminent judgment upon her: but in all other caſes, as in particular, between ſtroak and ſtroak, and plea and plea; and in caſes of greateſt moment, as of life and death, they were all to be determined without an oath, and the falſe witneſs on either ſide was to be puniſhed, according to the appointment of the Law: And in the New Teſtament, by Chriſt (the great Prophet and High-Prieſt of our profeſſion) it is ſo fully and abſolutely forbidden, and bound up with this word, *Not at all*, that nothing is plainer either in the Old or New Teſtament, and this continued in, and preached by his Apoſtles par-

particularly by *James*, who gives this the preheminence, in a peculiar manner, above all other things, that those whom he wrote to should be carefull to keep and observe, saying, *Above all things my Brethren swear not; neither by Heaven nor Earth, nor any other oath.* (which is an absolute negative exclusion of all swearing in all cases.) And *Eusebius*, an Antient Writer of no mean esteem among the learned, writes in his sixth book, *Chapter 4 page 98.* about the year 200. that *Basilides*, a Souldier, unto whom the Virgin *Potamiœna* was committed, as one appointed for Martyrdome: *But not long after, the same* Basilides *being required by his fellow-souldiers to swear upon some occasion* (that fell out) *affirmed plainly, it was not lawful for him to swear, for he said he was a Christian, and that he would in very deed protest the same*; who afterward was beheaded as a *Martyr*: And of the *Waldenses*, of whom the first Book of *Martyrs* makes much mention, and are said by some immediately to succeed the Apostles, and were dispersed into most parts of the world, and to be the most antient and true *Protestants*, (as may be seen by what *Fox* records of them in the Book of *Martyrs*) and this they maintained among other things, that all manner of swearing was unlawfull; as may appear by *Parsons*, *Sanders*, *Cocceius*, and others; and by Bishop *Usher* (a late Writer, and a man reputed for learning) who hath by way of Apology for the *Waldenses*, in this case of swearing, seemed to justifie them therein; as in his book *De Succes. Cap. 6.* And the said *Usher* further saves in his eighth Chap. (quoting some antient Authors) *that the* Waldenses, *as well as Anabaptists of late, did professe it to be no way lawfull for a Christian to swear, upon any occasion*; And *Theophilute* upon *Matthew 5. 37. Sayes, that though in the time of the Old Law it was not evil to swear; but since the coming of Christ it is evil, as is Circumcision, and in sum, whatever is judaical, for it may become a Child to suck, but not a man.*

And further in the Book of *Martyrs*, 1 Voll. *page 701.* it is charged against *William Thorp*, in his Sermon that he preached at *Shrewsbury*, that it is not lawfull to swear in any case: To which he answered, he denied to swear by a book, as being made up of creatures and quoates *Chrysostome* in these words,

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who blamed them greatly, who brought forth books to swear, whether they think a man to swear true or false, &c.

The Arch-bishop and his Clarks scorned this saying of *Thorp*, and the Bishop manaced him with great punishment, except he left this opinion of swearing; to which *Thorp* answered, it was not his Opinion, but the opinion of Christ, and of Saint *James*, and of *Chrysostome*, and of other divers Saints and Doctors: The Arch-bishop caused to be read this Homily of *Chrysostome*, which the Clark did accordingly, until he came to a Clause where *Chrysostome* sayes, *That it is sin to swear well*, &c. And again in *Fox*, Voll. 1. pa. 527. in the Ploughmans prayer, in these words, *Thou gavest us a Commandment in truth, in bidding us say yea, yea, nay, nay, and swear for nothing: Thou gavest us also a Commandment of meekness, and another of poorness; but Lord he that cleepeth himself thy Vicar on earth, hath both broken these Commandments, for he makes a Law to compel men to swear, and by his Law he teacheth, that a man to save his life, may forswear and lye; and so Lord, through comfort of him, and his Law, the people ne dreadeth not to swear, and to liven ought time to forswear them; Lord here is litle truth,* &c. Again, *William Swinderby*, an Article charged against him, *that no man ought to swear for any thing, but simply without an Oath, to affirm or deny, and if he swears, he sins.*

And those that are conversant in our Law, (what was the practice in antient time) where they testifie that Oaths antiently were not called *imprecations*, but *attestations*: And by the Statute-Law, an Act of *Parliament* made 28 *Hen.* 8. 7. in these words, it is said, *No man, of what estate, degree, or condition soever he be, hath power to dispence with Gods Law, as all the Clergy of this Realm in the said Convocation, and most part of all the Universities of Christendome; and we also do affirm and think,* &c. which makes void all Lawes, and practises, and customes, that are contrary to Christs Law, and the Apostles Doctrine, which sayes *Swear not at all*; and *above all things, my Brethren, swear not, neither by heaven nor earth, nor any other Oath,* &c. And to conclude this head, a lively Emblem we have this day practised in *England*, where it is practised, that those who are called Noble-men of *England*, are not put to their oaths (as it

is ſaid) in any caſe, but onely their teſtimony is taken upon their words, affirming or denying upon their Honours: And is there nothing left among Chriſtians in theſe our dayes, or the people of the Lord, that is as dear unto them, as an earthly great mans repute, and honour in the world is unto him? Bluſh for ſhame; and let it not be told in *Gath*, nor publiſhed in *Askelon*, that Chriſtianity is grown out of repute, or that a true Chriſtian may not be believed when he ſpeaks in the preſence and fear of the Lord, although at the ſame time, and in the ſame caſe, he ſhall be believed, that teſtifies onely upon his earthly honour. And to this Courts Martial may not be an unfit preſident, who proceeds both to the tryal and condemnation of perſons without an Oath, (taken by thoſe that ſit as Judges) and that upon this ground alſo, becauſe a Souldier is ſuppoſed to be ſo tender of his honour, that he will not impeach it by injuring another, or advantaging himſelf. So let all theſe things be put together, and what can be more clear, *then that Oaths, or ſwearing men ſince the comming of Chriſt* (before either they can be capable of office, or ſerving their Countrey, or their teſtimony be received in caſes of difference before Courts of Judicature) *is a Popiſh Inſtitution*, and hath no foundation or footing in the Scripture of truth, nor in the practiſe of the Primitive Chriſtians; nor hath not been without a teſtimony againſt it, by ſome in all ages, even down to this day?

Now follows the ſeverall inconveniences, that neceſſarily follow the impoſition of Oaths which might be prevented, if ſwearing were not compelled.

BEſides all that hath been ſaid, do not theſe inconveniences and miſchiefs neceſſarily follow the impoſition of Oaths, or determining things by ſwearing? &c.

Is not that which is called an Oath, (in many caſes) once taken

ken untraverſable? As for inſtance, one man having ſworn againſt another poſitively, is not he that is ſworn againſt left without remedy? and do not thoſe before whom the oath is taken (in ſome caſes) take themſelves concluded, and bound up by that oath, without any further examining witneſſes on the other ſide? or at leaſt if witneſſes be examined, of what force is their teſtimony, one or two men having ſworn poſitively the contrary? where often time the innocent are puniſhed, and the guilty go free, and the Author of evil undiſcovered: May it not be queried, Whether the Judge before whom the oath is taken, as aforeſaid, be clear of the blood of the innocent, in this caſe, although or becauſe a Law made in the will of man requires it, contrary to the Law of Chriſt? if he or they be clear, was not Queen *Mary* as clear of the blood of the Martyrs, upon the ſame account, ſhe being a lawfull Magiſtrate in that ſence? *&c.*

Again, is it not unequal and unjuſt, that all men (in ſome caſes) ſhould be puniſhable for ſwearing, (though ignorantly and unawares and yet no man (in other caſes) to be puniſhable at all, though they ſwear againſt their own knowledge, and that wilfully to, and this to be ordinary and common, as in the anſwers to the Bills in *Chancery* and *Chequer*? Which Bills will not be received without an oath; and they that dare not ſwear in obedience to Chriſts Command, hath been, and are impriſoned for contempt; ſo that he which departs from evil, makes himſelf a prey, and the keeping of Chriſts Commands are become a contempt: Do not theſe things make the times perilous? (let the upright judge) when on the contrary, he that ſwears to his anſwer, though never ſo falſe, and againſt his knowledge, and that to his own benefit (ſometimes) and prejudice of another, yet theſe men go unpuniſhed for their evil, becauſe they care not what they ſwear; and the other is puniſhed by impriſonment, became they fear an oath, and yet dare not but ſpeak the truth in their anſwers: So one man upon ſhed becauſe he cannot ſwear at all, (though his anſwer be true) and another man goes free, (though his anſwer be falſe) becauſe he ſwears (although it be) to a lye, and that againſt his own knowledge, as many who are now in priſon for con-

contempt, (so called) which contempt is only because they cannot swear at all: So that in short, one man is punished when his answer is true, only because he dare not swear, another man escapeth whenas his answer is false, because he dare swear to a lye, (and the other dare not swear at all) as many prisons, Bills and Answers in *Chancery* and *Chequer*, may witness. Again, if a man swear to an Indictment, though never so false, yet it is commonly found upon that oath, when as the man sworn against, knows not of it; yet that man, which (it may be) both maliciously and knowingly swears against his neighbour to his hurt, (it is said) is not liable to be punished by the Statute of Perjury, which mischief might be prevented by Witnesses without swearing. Further, is not the way of determining of things by oath, not only injurious and unequal, but also attended with great and necessary inconveniencies and evils, both to those that command swearing, and to those that do swear, as to those that cannot swear at all for conscience sake?

To those that command swearing, who do not only break Christs Commands themselves, but commands others so to do; but also are they not guilty of the forswearing of others, whenas they command men to take such oaths, as (before they give them) they themselves know it is impossible to keep and observe, and yet do compel the taking of them, or punish the neglect? as in the oaths of Offices and Officers, as *Sheriffs, Bayliffs, Constables*, and others, besides the oaths of Freemen of Cities and Corporations, *&c.* And in many other cases and imployments, before entrance upon them, oaths are required to be taken, when in deed and in truth, both those that give them, and those that take them, knows that little or nothing is intended to be done or looked after, more then the title of honor, and profit, and gain, that comes by them; though they swear to discharge their trust, and to do such and such things, which he that swears many times knows not what belongs to them, neither intends to trouble himself about them; as in several Offices relating to the Law, and Courts of Justice, and other places in the Common-weald: Again, is not swearing made use of as a seal to hypocrie,

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both to him that commands it, and to him that obeys? Because he that commands it, would not do it, but in order to his end, and the other would not take it, but for fear of a penalty, and because he cannot avoid it, he takes it, but in his own sense, and to his own end, and it may be quite contrary to the end of him that commanded it, or obtained to have it imposed, and so both of them are deceived, and deciving one another: Presidents for this, our dayes, as well as times past, may afford not a few; witness the several Oaths occationed by the several changes of late.

Secondly, The inconveniences and mischief that follow them that do swear: As first, many people that do swear they understand not what an Ooth is, neither of that which is called an Oath, many times they hear not one word that he which swears them, sayes unto them, he speaks them over so fast; and the man knows nothing sometimes until a book be put to his lips, and yet what this poor ignorant man, (having kissed the book) shall say, shall be of more force then divers witnesses, that have not yet sworn, or kissed the book; and it may be that he being on the affirmative, shall be more then two or three on the negative, who have better understood their Oaths, and spoken more to the purpose upon their oaths (as it is called) and so he that is sworne on the affirmative, having once spoken a word, or sworn to it, he dares not go back because of his Oath; though upon hearing other witnesses speak to the same thing he may be better informed, but dare not own any information, because sworn already to a contrary thing; which inconvenience would not be, if every man might witness forth his own knowledge without swearing, and yet to be punished for a false testimony, as much as if he had sworn false. Do not many mourn, and go heavily, because of oaths in this and other cases of the like nature?

Again, Do not much hurt and mischief come to many Swearers, because they know the force of an Oath (taken before a Justice of Peace, or other Magistrate) to binde a man to the good Behaviour, or to the Peace, or to do him some other displeasure, when indeed it is onely revenge and malice, though he takes his Oath (that speaks) that it is for neither; and it

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may be that he that is ſworn againſt, will be as ready to ſwear againſt the Complainant, and that upon the ſame ground? Now doth not this gratifie the luſt and wickedneſs in people, and ſo much the more, becauſe a ſingle Oath will accompliſh his wicked end of evenge, without any other teſtimony, which would not be gratified, if ſo be that witneſſes were to prove the thing, or that a man deliver his knowledge of ſuch things without an Oath; otherwiſe how can the Magiſtrate be clear from guilt, not onely of the Plaintiffs ſwearing, but alſo of his ſwearing maliciouſly and falſly? And alſo the ſame temptation is in an Indictment, which one Party waiting to do his neighbour a miſchief may ſwear to, and the Indictment upon that Oath muſt be found, and that in the abſence of him that is indicted, as before hath been ſaid; and this Indictment (ſworn to by a malicious man) ſhall be the foundation to take away his life, if the Crime be of that nature: So that here alſo is another miſchief, whereby the luſts of wicked men are gratified with other caſes of the like nature, which might be inſtanced.

Thirdly, The inconveniences that follows thoſe that cannot ſwear at all for conſcience ſake, whereby many are made uncapable of being made Free of Cities and Corporations, and others are made unapable of being ſerviceable in the Common-wealth, in any place or office of truſt; and others alſo are made unſerviceable as to give their teſtimony and evidence in caſes of difference between man and man; beſides many, who in divers caſes loſes the benefit of the Law of the Nation, becauſe that they cannot ſwear, and ſo by that means ſuffer the ſpoiling of their goods, and ungodly men make a prey upon them, knowing they cannot ſwear at all; which thing might be prevented, if according to the righteous Law of God, all things were eſtabliſhed out of the mouth of two or three Witneſſes, and thoſe that bore falſe witneſs, to be puniſhed as he ſhould have been againſt whom they have witneſſed, (if their teſtimony had been true) which Law is equal and juſt.

Fourthly, This NATION which now mourns becauſe of Oaths, might be preſerved from the Wrath and In-

dignation of God that hangs over this Nation, not onely becauſe of thoſe that command men to ſwear contrary to Chriſts Command; (and that, for to eſtabliſh cruelty and injuſtice) but alſo becauſe of thoſe that ſwear falſly, and that againſt their knowledge for their own profit, and diſadvantage of others, to accompliſh their wicked, malicious, and revengeful deſigns againſt the innocent, who dare not ſwear at all, and thereby are made a prey to the teeths of the Wolves, and to the wills of corrupt men, who take occaſion (as it were) *to plough furrows upon the back of the poor, and to oppreſs the needy, for which thing ſake, the Wrath of God ſhall be poured out upon the head of the wicked, and the Nations ſhall be on heaps, and the wiſe men ſhall be turned backward, and their table ſhall be a ſnare, and the curſe ſhall be upon the rebellious, and they ſhall fall, and be broken, and riſe no more:* And this may juſtly befall this Nation, becauſe of Oaths, and becauſe of oppreſſion.

Now follows a word of Advice to all thoſe who ſay the Scripture is their rule, and are zealous for the things contained therein,&c.

NOw all you that are ſeeking the Kingdom of Heaven in outward obſervations, (by which it comes not) and are taking up practiſes, by imitation from Commands laid down in the letter: Let me demand of you, Do you not finde this Command to proceed out of the mouth of Chriſt, *viz. But I ſay unto you, ſwear not at all?* And do not you finde the Apoſtle *James* abiding in this Doctrine? and hath it no room in your hearts? hath the traditions of your Fathers made it void to you? or is it becauſe it cannot be practiſed without reproach, Fines and Impriſonment, and ſo will coſt you ſomething which you cannot tell how to undergo, or part with, (you having not received the gift to ſuffer for his Names ſake?) or is your ſpirit different from *Davids*, (*who would not offer an offering to the Lord his God of that which coſt him nothing?*) in the fear of the Lord God of heaven and earth, (I beſeech you)

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consider, is there not a Vail over your hearts untaken away to this day, that you cannot see nor understand this to be a Command of Christs, with divers others, as plainly and as fully laid down in the letter, as those you contend so much for? And may you not be as justly numbred amongst those that make their boast of the Law, and yet through breaking of the Law dishonour God? Do ye think that the Lord will not arise to Judgement, and make you know that he is the Lord, and that you have not walked in his Statutes, neither executed his Judgements, but have done after the manner of the Heathen, that are round about, (whose wayes *Israel* was not to learn, for their Customes were vain) *Jeremiah* 10. 23. *Ezekiel* 11. 12. And upon a true and thorough search, (when the hidden things of *Esau* shall be searched out) will you not be found walking in the way of the Heathen, (speaking their unclean words, contrary to the language of the Scripture) and following their customes, (which are vain) in respecting of mens persons which the Apostle *James* sayes, (*James* 2. 9, 10.) whoever do, commits sin, and are convinced of the Law as transgressors; *For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.* Mark that, and think not to cover your selves with saying it is meant of persons in Judgement, for here is not a word spoken of Magistrates, but the words are general, and concerns all that regards Gods Law, as appears by the next words, *viz. For whosoever shall keep the whole, and yet offend in one point, &c.* And are not they out of the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, who respects persons? who sayes, *How can ye believe, while ye receive honour one of another, and seeks not the honour that comes from God onely.* (*John* 5. 44. *Matthew* 22. 16.) *God onely.* Mark, *from God onely*; and he himself practised this Doctrine for he neither received honour from man, nor regarded any mans person, as his very enemies bore testimony of him, that he taught the way of God truly, and regarded no mans person. But is not this Command also too dear for you? Will it not cost you too much to practise? Do you not know it will hinder your promotion in the world? Are you not more afraid (that if you should refuse to respect mens persons, and to give flattering

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titles to men, (*Job.* 32. 21, 22.) the Goaler would take you away, then that your Maker would soontake you away, if you did do it; and is not this a Command, that you should not be conformed to this world? *Romans* 12. 2. 16. and that you should not conform to men of high degree, but condiscend to men of low degree? are not these, with others, the Commands of Christ? and are not you too much like the professing *Jews* herein, who had plentifull knowledge of the letter without them, but had not his word abiding in them? Though they could dispute and reason with Christ, and against his Apostles, with the word of truth, yet Christ tells them plainly, his Word was not abiding in them, which the Saints had received from Christ, whereby they were made clean, and by it (which dwells richly in them) they made melody in their hearts to God; and *David* the Servant of the Lord, *Psalm* 119. 6. 11. by the word which he had in his heart, he was kept from sin against God, and thereby had respect to all Gods Commands. Now examine your selves, and try your own selves, whether you be in the Faith, and the same Word of Life be in you, and whose steps you walk in, and whom you are found imitators of; whether *Abraham*, who forsook his Country to go to the Land which the Lord had shewed him? and *Moses* steps, who chose rather to suffer with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season? or whether you do not walk in the steps of him whom you so often upbraid others with, namely *Naaman* the *Assyrian*, who spoke good words, and yet could not forsake his old Master, to serve the Lord fully, 2 *Kings* 5. 18. But when he went into the house of *Rimmon*, his Master leaning on his hand, and he bowed down himself, *in that thing he would be pardoned.* Mark, *In this thing pardon thy Servant*; he knew it was evil, and desired pardon for it; and yet when his Master leaned upon his hand, he must bow, least he should lose his place, and gain his Masters displeasure. Now examine your selves, doth not something let you see, (that notwithstanding all the Lord hath done for you, and all that you have ever tasted or enjoyed from him) yet there is this thing, or the other thing, that you continue in the practise of, for one end or other, which you know you

ſhould not do; and in words you deſire pardon for them, but you ſtill continue in the ſame practiſe, your very prayers witneſſing againſt you; and like thoſe, *James* 4. 3. you are *ſtill asking, but receive not, becauſe you ask amiſs, to ſpend it upon your Luſts*; ſtill to continue in your Maſters ſervice, in conforming to the cuſtomes and faſhions of the world, and in walking after the traditions of your Fathers, as in particular in this caſe of ſwearing, which Chriſt hath ſo plainly and fully forbidden; and therefore your prayers return as dung in your faces, your conſciences condemning of you, the which if you did regard to keep void of offence, both toward's God and towards men, (in the light of Chriſt) you would have confidence towards God, and *whatſoever you asked of him, you would receive, becauſe you keep his Commandements, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight*, *John* 3. 22. But now is blindneſs, barrenneſs, and leanneſs of ſoul upon you, and yet you cry you are rich, and you ſee, and have need of nothing, and hateth and diſputeth againſt that which letteth you ſee the things which have need of pardon, and ſo you are *loaden with Sin, and led away with divers Luſts, alwayes learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*; and therefore are not free, and in your principles conclude never can be, while you are in this world; and ſo by what hath been ſaid, you may ſee, (your own condition as a man ſees his face in a Glaſs) how that you not only reſpect mens perſons, preferring one before another, but alſo Chriſts Commands, picking out what you like, and what may keep you in the repute of the world, and preſerve you in the preferment thereof, but thoſe that may expoſe you to hazzard, or make you liable to the worlds ſcorn, though as fully and expreſly required by Chriſt (of all his followers) to be kept and obſerved, you let ſlip, and paſs by, as a thing of nought: But *be not deceived, God will not be mocked, for what a man ſoweth, that ſhall he reap; he that ſoweth to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap Corruption*: And this ſhall you aſſuredly receive at his hand, (if you repent not of your double min') *you ſhall lye down in ſorrow, and he ſhall laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your fear comes.*

Now

Now follows ſome reaſons or grounds, whereby the Spiritual eye, or the man whoſe underſtanding is opened, may come to ſee the neceſsity of the abolſhing of ſwearing, ſince the dayes of Chriſts coming in the fleſh.

FIrſt, Becauſe all the things of the Law were but ſhadows of the good things to come, *Heb.* 12. 1. *But Chriſt is the ſubſtance of all thoſe types and ſhadows, and is come into the world, and is manifeſt in his Saints, and true Chriſtians, and hath given them an underſtanding whereby they know him that is true, and are in him that is true, and he in them, and he works all their works for them, and in them*, and teacheth them to ſpeak truth ſimply, without guile or fraud, *and as he is, ſo are they in this world*, and believes in him, and follows his ſteps, who is the truth, and in whoſe mouth there was found no guile.

Secondly, Becauſe ſwearing implyes unbelief, to be either in the perſon ſwearing, or in him for whoſe ſake the oath is taken or ſworn; which is not to be ſuppoſed to be in thoſe (as predominant or ruling) who are Saints, or true Chriſtians, who are redeemed not only from a vile, but a vain converſation alſo, and from the traditions of their Fathers, (that are not after Chriſt) and from fear and unbelief alſo, and every evil word and way, and are called unto holineſs and truth, and are without fault before the Throne of God, which things are found in the new heart, that is Gods gift, and in the new man that is created after God, and renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him, and ſo they are come to the end of all oaths, and out of fears, and doubts, and unbelief, to have ſtrong conſolation through Chriſt Jeſus, the way to the Father.

Thirdly, Becauſe herein; namely, by the aboliſhing of ſwearing, do the excellency, precedency, and eminency of the New

New Covenant, exceed the Old; for the Old in this was faulty, *viz.* that it made nothing perfect, but this New Covenant and better hope doth; for in this Covenant all the Children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and great is their peace, and out of ſtrife and contention, and the uſe of Oaths are they come; into the Covenant of Light and Peace, in which they reſt with God, in the ſenſe of the forgiveneſs of their ſins, and the bleſſedneſs of their ſtate, wherein their iniquity is remembred no more; for *their Tents are beautifull, and their habitations are pleaſant*: And here is *Jacob* inheriting the bleſſing, *in whom God ſees no ſin*; and the true *Iſraelites* indeed, who walks according to the rule, and *in whom he ſees no iniquity*, but peace is his portion for ever. Of what hath been ſpoken, this is the ſum, that Chriſt hath forbid all manner of ſwearing in all caſes whatſoever; and this Doctrine was continued in by his Apoſtles, and practiſed by the true Chriſtians in the firſt ages of the Church, and hath been ſealed with the blood of Martyrs, and borne witneſs to by ſome in all ages, down to this day, and the contrary practiſe is a *Popiſh Innovation*, and a *Jeſuiticall* deſign to keep down the true headſhip of the Church, and to ſet up him, and to keep his Authority afoot, whom the Lord is ariſing to deſtroy with the Spirit of his mouth, (and to conſume with the brightneſs of his coming) who hath been, and is the cauſe of ſo much bloodſhed, and diſcord, and variance, among the Children of men, whereby Self hath kept the Throne, and Equity and Righteouſneſs hath fallen in the ſtreets, and he that departs from iniquity, hath made himſelf a prey, and the manner and cuſtomes of the Heathen hath been followed, even by thoſe who have profeſſed a zeal for Chriſt and his Commands, who while they have been profeſſing of them, have made them void by the traditions of men, and true Chriſtianity with Saintſhip, (by their means) is become a reproach, and the Name of the Lord hath been Blaſphemed among the Heathen, becauſe of theſe things; but the Lord is ariſing, (*as a Giant refreſhed with wine*) who hath ſeen the deſolate ſtate of his Spouſe, and is ſaying to *Sion, Ariſe, ſhine thy light is come, for the Glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee, ſhake off the duſt from thy feet, put on thy beautifull*

tifull garment for thou ſhalt be no more termed deſolate, or forſaken, and to the brightneſs of thy riſing ſhall Nations come, and Princes to thy beauty, and the glory and the riches of the Nations ſhall be laid down at thy feet, and thou ſhalt be crowned with renown for ever, and the everlaſting gates ſhall be opened, and the righteous Nation that keeps the truth, ſhall enter in; and none ſhall be able to make them afraid, (but the ſwearers and lyars ſhall be ſhut out) and this is the Heritage of the Servants of the Lord forever.

But *becauſe of ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and whoring, they break out, and blood toucheth blood, therefore ſhall the Land mourn, and every one that dwells therein ſhall be cut off*, Hoſea 4. 2. 3.

From henceforth let no man think it ſtrange, that any denies to ſwear *at all*, but rather wonder, that the God of this world ſhould ſo long have blinded the mindes of them that believe not, (in the light of the Son of God) leaſt by the ſhining of the light in their hearts, they ſhould come to the knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Chriſt, and by him ſhould be taught to ſpeak truth without ſwearing, and ſo he become the Head over all things to the Church, who is God over all, bleſſed for evermore. *Amen.*

THE END.